

Appl. No. 09/539,461

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, an objection was made to claim 12, and in particular to the phrase "the method of claim ii". The objected phrase has been amended as suggested by the Examiner, to read "the method of claim 11".

Independent claim 4 has been amended to incorporate features previously recited in claim 10, which has been cancelled. As the Examiner indicated on page 3 of the Office Action that claim 10 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, it is believed that claim 4 as amended is similarly allowable.

Rejected claims 5-9 depend from claim 4 and therefore are also believed to be allowable.

Claim 11 has been amended to depend from claim 4, and claim 12 has been amended to depend from claim 11 as noted above.

Claims 4-9, 11, and 12 thus recite subject matter which has been identified as being allowable.

Claims 1-3 and 13-21 have already been allowed, as indicated on page 3 of the Office Action.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the claims remaining in the application, specifically claims 1-9 and 11-21 are allowable, and accordingly reconsideration and issuance of a Notice of Allowance in respect of this application are earnestly solicited.

Although, claims 4-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Tezuka (United States Patent No. 6,331,989), it should be appreciated that the amendments and arguments presented herein are made solely to advance the examination of the application. These amendments and arguments should not be interpreted as an admission of relevance of the cited reference to Tezuka or the appropriateness of the claim rejections based thereon.

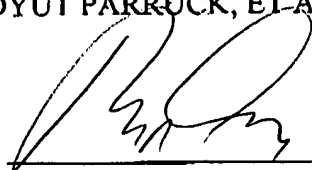
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In view of the foregoing, early favorable consideration of this application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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